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PREFACE

121 This is one of five monographs prepared by the staff of the China Project at Stanford University in fulfillment of a twelve-month subcontract with the Human Relations Area Files, Incorporated, New Haven, Connecticut.

The main purpose of this monograph is to present insofar as possible a concise account of the social, economic, and political conditions and problems of the Southwest China Region, which is comprised of the provinces of Szechwan, Kweichow, and Yunnan. Although primary emphasis is placed on developments since the Chinese Communists assumed the reins of government in the latter part of 1949, whenever necessary the region's past is touched upon.

114 It may be helpful to point out to readers unfamiliar with the Chinese source material used for the preparation of this monograph that, generally, official publications published before 1949 in Nanking or Chungking were of Nationalist origin, whereas those dated from 1949, unless their place of publication is Taipei, Hong Kong, or some other non-Communist area, are Communist sources. Moreove

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PREFACE

121 101 The work herewith presented to the public is the first of a series on West China. It deals with a circumscribed area in northwest Yün-nan, Hsi-k'ang, Tibet and southwest Ssu-ch'uan inhabited by the Na-khi tribe known to the Chinese as Mo-so 麼些. While the region has been explored geographically in the strictest sense of the word, yet it includes areas, such as that of the Wu-so 五所 in southwestern Ssu-ch'uan, very little known, and visited at best by one two or three Europeans including the author.

Most explorers are content with a hurried reconnaissance of a given area, their aim being to cover as much territory as possible in the time at their disposal. Not so the author. I have spent twelve years exploring thoroughly the Na-khi inhabited part of Yün-nan, Hsi-k'ang 西康 and adjacent areas; first as agricultural explorer of the United States Department of Agriculture of Washington, D.C., then for the National Geographic Society of the same city and finally on my own, when I could devote my time exclusively to the study of the Na-khi tribe, their literature and the land they occupy.

127 Before undertaking to write this work, I spent the major part of my savings collecting, first of all, the Chinese literature on West China and eastern Tibet, and second, all publications in European languages pertaining to this area. I secured the various editions of the topographies or T'ung-chih 通志 not only of the western provinces, but of all the eighteen provinces of China and its dependencies; I bought all the local gazetteers, Hsien-chih 縣, Chou-chih 州, and T'ing-chih 廳 of Yün-nan, Ssu-ch'uan, Kan-su, and Tibet, published by the Chinese authorities from the Ming days to the present. These western China gazetteers have become exceedingly rare due to the devastations of the Mohammedan rebellion, which lasted for nearly 25 years, when all the printing blocks were destroyed and editions, stored in the official Yamens of the various districts, were burnt. Such records as were no longer obtainable in the provinces, I had copied from unica found only in the Palace Library and the National Library of Peiping. The Catholic Mission Library of Zikawei near Shanghai, rich in gazetteers, had also consented to have its rare and precious books copied. My own library contains many rare works not to be found in other libraries in Asia, Europe or America.

While living in Li-chiang, the capital of the former Na-khi Kingdom, I had all important inscriptions on stelae copied, and personally photographed genealogical records of tribal chiefs, precious manuscripts, heirlooms dating back to the T'ang and Sung dynasties. In addition, I collected over 4,000 ancient Na-khi pictographic manuscripts. A number of these are of historic interest, while the remainder deal with the religious literature of the Na-khi which is akin to the Bön, the pre-Buddhistic religion of Tibet.

114 My predilection for Chinese characters made me begin the study of the Chinese written language at the age of 15. It created a desire in me to explore the vast hinterland of China and to learn to know its history and geography at first hand. It caused me to study the ancient Na-khi language, now no more in use, but preserved in the pictographic literature, which has at last given up its secrets. Thus equipped, I undertook the task of delving into the history of this fascinating and wonderful country, which I covered

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INTRODUCTION

It hardly needs to be pointed out that "superstition" and magic rule the life and conduct in pre-industrial communities the world over - much more than in modern industrialized communities. One use of such "superstition" and magic is for the cure or prevention of disease.(1) Such practices and ideas have been one of the main targets of Chinese reform in recent years. The current assumptions on this matter are that (1) "superstition" and magic have to be replaced entirely by scientific knowledge and practices - there can be no half way and (2) the chief problem confronting the reformer and the farmer alike is that of finance. When there is enough money to enable the people to acquire "better" things (e.g. modern measures of sanitation) to take the place of the old practices, the "better" things will prevail. This, it is said, is especially true if the practice concerned has little or nothing to do with moral standards.

Are these assumptions sound and workable? What is the nature of magic and "superstition"? What do modern social scientists have to say about this problem?

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(1) Magic refers to the practice and "superstition" to the ideas behind the practice. The author is not concerned with a one-hundred percent distinction between magic and "superstition" on the one hand or between modern medicine and ideas about health on the other. Such a distinction, if carried to extreme limits, will, as far as one can see, be incapable of satisfactory application to facts; for by magic and "superstition" scientists refer to practices and beliefs which assume a causal relationship between two or more phenomena that is not demonstrable by any known methods of science. It is then evident that, considering the nature and limitations of modern science, there must be facts which are as yet not scientifically established, just as there have always been "facts" which have later turned out to be false assumptions. In other words, the respective domains of scientific knowledge and magical beliefs are not permanent but change as scientific methods gradually penetrate into the mysterious interior of reality. But for practical purposes, unless we wish to be over-argumentative, we shall have no difficulty in distinguishing the main body of scientific knowledge from the main body of magical beliefs. For example, no one will reasonably deny at present that burning amulets as a war effort is a magical practice just as no one will reasonably deny at present that the scientific way of treating most cancerous growths is by their surgical removal. Moreover, the distinction between magic and religion involves questions which do not concern us here.

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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF MAGIC AND "SUPERSTITION"

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The point of departure is that many reformers have failed to realize that magic and "superstition" are part and parcel of the psycho-social-economic context in which they have arisen, just as present-day Western medicine and sanitary ideas (and science in general) have their appropriate psycho-social-economic background. If modern social scientists have made one definitive contribution on the nature of society it is that there is no isolated individual just as there is no isolated institution. The individual grows up and becomes a part of a group or groups deeply immersed in a body of traditions and rules of conduct. The institution is formed and functions among other institutions closely related to it and interwoven with each other.

This means that just as the individual cannot be removed from the group or groups in which he is a member without more or less serious consequences to the group or groups, the institution or established practice cannot be put out of existence without large or small disturbances, leading ultimately to breakdowns, to the group of institutions among which it functions as a part. What is more, while the individual may be removed from his group comparatively easily by force (such as imprisonment, exile, execution or excommunication), the removal of an institution or established practice (such as by iconoclastic destruction, governmental orders, or financial power) presents a far more difficult proposition, because an institution usually is deeply entrenched in a large number of minds. Under such circumstances any attempt at an outright omission of one institution without regard for its social context, even if another one is superior and well carved out to take its place, is unlikely to succeed.

Or we may review the matter in a somewhat different set of terminology. Modern anthropologists generally agree with Professor Malinowski that magic fills the gaps of science, i.e. magical practices occur at places where scientific knowledge is weakest. In other words, magical practices, which are the characteristic expression of one type of institutions, make up the vacancy left or unfilled by scientific practices, which are the characteristic expression of another type of institutions. If this conclusion is unconditionally true to the nature of the relation between magic and science in all states of a culture, then we should expect that when the points of weakness in our scientific knowledge are no longer weak magical practices can be replaced with a minimum of difficulties by the incoming practices based upon the newly discovered knowledge of science. To bring the argument home, if the conclusion that magic fills the gaps of science can unconditionally stand as it is, then when a scientific procedure which is known to be effective in the larger world can solve a medical problem which in a local community has usually been solved by magical means, the new procedure will automatically replace the traditional practice. But this prediction is not realized in fact, as may be seen in the case of "West Town",(2) a local community in the Tali area, Yunnan, where the author has been particularly fortunate in observing from beginning to end a cholera epidemic – how it affected the people, what preventive and curative measures were applied, and what ideas appeared to motivate their behavior.

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(2) For purposes of the present paper the town is called "West Town," hereafter to be written without the quotation mark. The names of persons and places of the locality are also altered.

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PREFACE

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Ever since the writer interested himself in the study of land-use, he has been eager to prepare a comprehensive account on the conditions of land-use in his native area, the Szechuan Basin. The present study is a result of that intention and it represents one of the series of studies the writer has planned along that line. The investigation, as herewith presented, is limited to an analysis of the agricultural and forestry land-use of the Basin.

In addition to numerous journeys in the Szechuan Basin and to the many observations made in previous years, the writer undertook an air-reconnaissance flight over the Basin--from Hankow via Chungking to Chengtu--during the early summer of 1934. Since then, the writer has been in constant touch with the area by correspondence and has collected considerable amounts of valuable and elusive data from numerous sources. Moreover, every effort has been made and every caution taken to bring the data employed in the dissertation up to date from all the reliable sources available. It is, however, deeply regretted that the serious handicaps of the war have prevented the writer from making more recent reconnaissance surveys in the Basin.

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Many friends and former colleagues have contributed to the completion of the present study. To Dr. H. R. Wei, Dean of the College of Science, and Chairman of the Department of Physics at the University of Nanking, (now at Chengtu); Professor C. S. Fang, Department of Botany of the College of Agriculture of the same institution; and Professor H. Y. Hu, Acting Chairman and Professor of the Department of Geography, National Central University, Chungking, the writer wishes to express his deep thanks and sincere gratitude for their generous assistance in securing valuable data and in furnishing much-needed documents. Grateful acknowledgments are also due to the writer's close friend, the Honorable T. S. Wang, Member of the National Senate (Legislative Yuan) of China, for having his efficient clerical staff compile and copy large amounts of valuable data from unpublished sources. To all these gentlemen, the writer wishes to present his deep thanks.

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CHAPTER I

SZECHUAN BASIN IN TRANSITION

121 The primary objective of this dissertation is a critical geographical evaluation of the agricultural and forestry land use of Szechuan Basin. Throughout the study emphasis has been placed on first, a presentation of the most characteristic features of the Basin, and second, a correlation of cultural life, especially agricultural and forestry land use practices, with the major natural elements of the Basin. Attention also is directed to the unique qualities which made the Basin a vital unit in China's resistance to invasion by the Japanese and to the growing significance in China's evolving economy.

131 Szechuan Basin is one of the large and distinctive regions of China. Surrounded by lofty mountain ranges and unique in its cultural development, the Basin is a clear-cut geographic unit. It has a mild, humid climate, fertile soil, a diversity of agricultural products, abundant mineral resources, and numerous important forestry, horticultural, and animal products. Szechuan Basin may be justly said to be the most self-sufficient region of China. In fact, by virtue of the great diversity of its products, the Basin is almost a miniature model of all China. It is an empire within an empire.

175 Szechuan Basin is an ancient land from the standpoint of human occupation and utilization. Aside from the upper Yellow River Valley provinces, Szechuan Basin was the earliest area of China to be settled. The first organized Chinese migration into the Basin took place in the fifth century B.C. As early as the feudal Chin period (360-251 B.C.), the Basin had already begun to assume considerable economic-geographic importance in China's national life, a role which has increased in importance since that time.

166 On account of its central geographic position (in relation to the surrounding land-locked provinces of southwest China), the Basin has received greatly diversified groups of emigrants from